

Grandstreet giddy (from page 1)

There were more than 4,000 nominees for the award, which is presented by the Tony Awards and Carnegie Mellon University. Adams flew to New York City early Friday morning, June 5, to attend Sunday's awards ceremony at Radio City Music Hall.

"When they called and told me, I was stunned," said Adams.

She was tricked into the conference call by co-worker Jeff Downing, Grandstreet's artistic director, who told her it was a planning call from the director of one of Grandstreet's summer plays.

"We are pleased to tell you that of the over 4,000 applicants, you're in the top three," said Adams, quoting the phone call from Heather Hitchens, president of American Theatre Wing, and Charlotte St. Martin, president of the Broadway League. "You're a runner-up."

"(They) let me know there were two runners-up," said Adams. "And they were so excited and passionate and kind."

The award sponsors flew her to New York and paid for her hotel, Adams said. She attended a pre-Tony Award event, a Tony Awards rehearsal and the ceremony.

And said, if she could squeeze it in, two to three theater productions, as well.

Adams and a couple of her Grandstreet colleagues have known the news for about a week, but were sworn to secrecy until Thursday, June 4, when Carnegie Mellon announced the winner and finalists.

Thursday afternoon, Adams was still scrambling around town to get together a fancy dress and dressy shoes for the ceremony, as well as fielding phone calls and interviews and responding to Facebook posts.

For Adams, the award is all about shining a national spotlight on supporting arts education.

"It's such a message to the world about the importance of the arts," she said. "That's why this award is so important."

And as part of the honor, Grandstreet Theatre will receive \$1,000.



Marianne Adams, nominated for a Tony Award by her students at Grandstreet Theatre, was one of three finalists from among 4,000 applicants.

(Photo by Thom Bridge, *Independent Record*)

The teaching award also might raise awareness that behind those Tony Award-winning actors and Oscar recipients were, no doubt, some powerhouse theater teachers who believed in them.

Sometimes it is the arts teachers who are the ones telling young people, "You can do this," Adams said.

And sometimes they are also the ones who have to have the heart to say, "You should be an engineer."

From the get-go, Adams was just excited that her students thought so highly of her that they would nominate her for the prestigious Tony Award. In a May 24 *Independent Record* article she said of the nomination video, "What matters to me is those people who thought that about me. For me, I feel like I won."

"I was overwhelmed to begin with, that the students would nominate me and their passion about it," she said. "And then to be in the top three ..."

"The best fun was calling those people who nominated me and telling them the news and to say thank you. ... I've been telling them, 'Oh my gosh; it's unbelievable.' And they're saying, 'Oh, no, it's not.'"

"Of all the people I have sent out into the universe, I never dreamed that the first to be mentioned on the Tony Awards would be me. Never!" she said.

"It's a very exciting time around here," said Retta Leaphart, an actress and freelance theater professional who headed up the nomination effort and dropped into the Grandstreet hubbub Thursday afternoon. "I'm so glad she is receiving recognition on such a large scale. It's really exciting that the greater theater world is going to celebrate her and support her."

Grandstreet held a Tony Award viewing party Sunday in Helena and were hoping the national broadcast would include some of the nominating materials.

Unlike a lot of teachers a child has, Adams could be a Grandstreet student's teacher for up to a dozen years – from kindergarten on up.

What Adams teaches goes far beyond theater skills, Leaphart said. She teaches you about being a person and a member of the community.

Leaphart decided to do the nomination after she was asked by theater friends in New York why so many Helenans were in the professional theater world.

"It's because of this place," she said as she gazed around Grandstreet's lower lobby, where the walls are full of photos from previous productions. "It's pretty overwhelming when you look at the breadth of people out there professionally. We could have done 20 different nomination videos."

"I'm just thrilled," Leaphart said. "I hope she has the time of her life."

"We're just so proud," added Downing. "This award is wonderful in so many ways because it brings so much attention to the arts educators," specifically theater arts educators.

"We are just one of three communities in the country to get this award," he said. "We know how wonderful she is and what this theater program gives to the community – and what an incredible way to celebrate that."



5

Brickyard Bash to Benefit Archie Bray Foundation

Lights, camera, auction! Grab your fancy pants and fabulous friends for the 19th annual Bray Benefit Auction and "Red Carpet" Brickyard Bash, 6 p.m. July 25 at the Archie Bray Foundation in Helena.

The Bray Benefit Auction – including cup, silent and live auctions – showcases work from more than 110 ceramic artists from around the country. The cup auction closes at 7 p.m. July 25, the silent auction ends at 7:15 p.m. and the Live Auction commences at 7:30 p.m. with the presentation of the 2015 Meloy-Stevenson Award. Following the live auction, dance to the cool tunes of the Big Sky Mudflaps and Salsa Loca.

Tickets are \$10-\$14; call 406-443-3502 ext. 18 or visit archiebray.org.

The Brickyard Bash began in 1984 to celebrate the purchase of the Bray family brickyard and to thank the community for its support. Under the direction of Kurt Weiser, the acquisition of 26 acres allowed for new studios, improvement to the clay business facilities, and opportunities for the residents to "stretch out and do things they never did before."

Play It Missoula! brings painted pianos to town

Three artist-adorned pianos have taken up residence in downtown Missoula this summer as part of Play It Missoula!, a community project designed to showcase visual art, music and place-making efforts. Two additional pianos will dwell outside the downtown area, on W. Broadway and S. Reserve St..

The project began in 2014 as a partnership between the Downtown Business Improvement District and The University of Montana Keyboard Society. As the program grows, the goal is to enhance Missoula's sense of community and pride as people slow down to appreciate art, listen, play, and build community through music and stories.

"The pianos have really taken on a life of their own by helping downtown Missoula create a novel and unique community story," said Tim France, president of the Downtown Business Improvement District (BID) Board of Trustees and owner of Worden's Market. "Last year's North Higgins piano significantly helped change the dynamics of this location from a sidewalk alley-way with daily fist fights to a positive gathering spot for musicians and listeners alike."

The downtown pianos and their creators include:

- "Myrtle's Stop," painted by Amber Flaherty, located on S. Higgins in front of the recent Hip Strip mural installation between Bathing Beauties and Betty's Divine.
- "Ghosts" by Bayla Arietta, at Bank Street Pocket Park next to Hunter Bay Coffee on Higgins Ave.
- "The Fox," painted by Luke Smith and Madeline Carr, on North Higgins Ave. near Worden's Market.

"I like to combine music and painting," says Smith. "Missoula, the 'Zoo,' is a wild place and that's why I chose the fox."

In addition to the three outdoor downtown locations, "Real Good," a piano painted by Jack Metcalf, is at the Broadway Bar and Grill Courtyard at the Broadway Inn, and Paul Tiede's painted piano is at Starving Artist Café and Gallery at the Larchmont Building on South Reserve.

People are invited to view and play the five newly-placed pianos, which will remain in their locations through September.

For details, visit www.missouladowntown.com/pianos.



"Myrtle's Stop," painted by Amber Flaherty, is located on Missoula's Hip Strip.

CONDOLENCES TO ...

The friends and family of **Bill Lovelady**. He died April 23 at 91. When he was 19 years old, he was drafted into the U.S. Army where he fought in the Battle of the Bulge in World War II. He said his war experience made him a lifelong pacifist, and he later became a Quaker and helped restart Helena's weekly Quaker meeting. Lovelady had successful careers as a teacher, stenographer, welfare administrator, youth counselor, accountant, efficiency expert, general contractor, picture framer, and always a writer. He was retired when he moved to Helena 17 years ago and spent much of his time here reading, writing poetry, taking classes at Carroll College, and educating his family

and friends. He was known for his feisty letters to the editor, daily hikes, and ping-pong matches with his wife. With the help and encouragement of his friend Will Boland and daughter Georgia, he published a poetry book titled *Half-Blind Mirror* in 2012. Some of his poems were read to a full audience at the Lewis and Clark Library.

– From the *Independent Record*, April 29

The family and friends of **Patricia Hamilton (McGillis) Steele**. The long-time supporter of the C.M. Russell Museum died May 26 at her home in Great Falls. Patricia and her husband, Ray Steele, were active in the arts for many years. She was on the board of the C.M. Russell Museum and received the Josephine Trigg Award from the Russell for outstanding contributions and support.

– From the *Missoulian*, May 27